Dear Jim, Re:Nagell; Archives apparent withholding from Popkin 6/5/75

While I'll be happy if what you told me yesterday about Popkin's experience at the Archives pans out, that he gets the stuff and it has meaning, I want to suggest a few cautions.

You may want to balance these against my prejudice against him, personally and professionally. The personal stems from the disreputable things he, NYReview and Avon did in 1966. It would have given me a personal distaste is I were not victimized by it. And what he wrote amounts to a defense of the Commission and assumes guilt.

The things he has been associated with, the speech at Georgetown and his failure to even try to keep the San Diego committee within reasonable grounds add to the professional distate from the personal distate.

About Nagell: some of the incredible is very real. He somehow miraculously did surviving the coming apart of one of large fourmotor propeller planes that had this nasty habit. He fell miles to the ground and lived. It was near Baltimore.

One might impute the help he got when he was arrested in East Germany after his Garrison contacts to a continuing agency connection. I do not think it means that. It can. It can also mean they felt they had reason to get him out.

In all the time he spent with Garrison and others I know of nothing solid that came out of it. Because I had questions, and they go back to the Garrison interview with him when he was in jail,unless I have him mixed up with Bolton, and never found answers and never found a situation except one in which the others wanted to freeze me out, I was quite content to be out of it.

That Jones Harris was in on this also makes me leery. He was in on that spooky meeting with Garrison in New York the time of the Garrison ABC broadcast in New York. They walked for a long time in Central Park for "security."

I think we have to begin with the assumption that he is, at the least, an unstable man. It may be much more serious and I think the odds favor this. From any such condition whether or not they are valid exemptions can be invoked.

We need also to assume that he is a man who knows the business and the realities. This means he had to know all about Hoover or was politcally sympathetic to Hoover's views and practises.

Either way I have trouble with his writing Hoover.Why not, among others, the Secret Service, which had juridiction Hoover did not?

The files abound in nut stuff. The difference with Nagell is his past, CIA.

Take the Valle case, for example. There was a reasonable basis for suspecting him but there is no connection with the assassination. There also was an inadequate investigation with some obfuscation.

The way the secrecy works Nagell's past official connections is enough to cause withholding, hiding, etc. These people all think it is necessaary to hide any files referring to these spooks even if the essence is known. While I have no idea why Popkin had these experiences and can believe they are real, I can also thing of what in the circumstances are normal explanations.

I don't pretend to know what can be in those papers. All I'm suggesting is that until there is substantial reason to believe there is substance reason to assume it ranges from non-existent to clouded.

I've never tried to think it through but another interpretation is possible, that Nagell, regardless of his psychological state, could have been part of a disinformation operation.

Bearing on this, I know of no connection or relationship he ever had with any but the most suspect.

Best,